

NAWG's CEO stepping down after three years

The head of the National Association of Wheat Growers will step down May 31. NAWG recently announced CEO Jim Palmer's decision to leave in a press release. "Jim has been a tremendous and tireless advocate of the U.S. wheat grower specifically, and the U.S. wheat industry in general, during his tenure as our CEO," NAWG president Gordon Stoner, a

Montana wheat grower, said in a press release. Stoner said that Palmer "strongly desired" to reduce or eliminate his "professional and personal obligations" to spend more time with his "far-flung family." NAWG will immediately begin its national search for a new CEO and has asked Palmer to assist the organization's executive committee in managing that effort. Palmer

will coordinate the receiving of resumes, but not serve on the search committee. Palmer said it is a good time for NAWG to have a CEO with different skillsets. "While financial and staff management acumen are certainly necessary in any CEO position, top-level agriculture policy development and advocacy experience is very much needed by NAWG as we enter into negotiations for

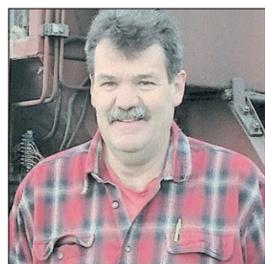
the next Farm Bill," Palmer said in the press release. "This particular skill set would complement perfectly our current excellent advocacy and technical support staff." NAWG will begin accepting qualified resumes immediately. Anyone interested in the position should send a letter of interest, resume, references and salary requirements to Palmer's attention

at National Wheat Growers Association, 415 Second St. NE, Suite 300; Washington, DC 20002 or email ceo@wheatworld.org. NAWG should receive resumes and documents by May 2 to be considered. Palmer joined the organization in 2013. He previously spent most of his career working for the soybean industry, serving as executive director of the Minnesota

Soybean Growers Association and Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council from 1997 to 2012. He also served as lead staff for the Joint American Soybean Association and American Soybean Development Foundation Farmer Directors Committee and is a past acting administrator and executive director of the United Soybean Board, according to NAWG.

First Amalgamated grower becomes ASGA president

By JOHN O'CONNELL
Capital Press



Courtesy of Galen Lee
Galen Lee, of New Plymouth, Idaho, was recently sworn in as the first president of the American Sugarbeet Growers Association from Amalgamated Sugar Co.

NEW PLYMOUTH, Idaho — For the first time, an Amalgamated Sugar Co. member occupies the American Sugarbeet Growers Association's top post. Galen Lee, of New Plymouth, was sworn in for a two-year term as ASGA president in February, becoming the first Amalgamated grower to hold the position since the organization was formed in the mid-1970s. "It is a watershed event," said Duane Grant, a Rupert, Idaho, grower who serves as chairman of the board of Snake River Sugar Co., which runs Amalgamated. ASGA, the industry's political arm, serves 10,000 family farmers in 11 states, with a goal to "unite sugarbeet growers in the U.S. and promote the common interest of state and regional beet grower associations."

Lee, who partners in farming with his parents, credits skilled employees with making the opportunity possible. Markwart said the only other ASGA president from the Northwest was the organization's first president, Pete Funk, of Moses Lake, Wash., who wasn't with Amalgamated. Markwart said ASGA members fly annually to Washington, D.C., to lobby Congress on a host of issues, including defending the nation's no-cost sugar policy. Lee believes the top priority in the near future will be supporting passage of a voluntary national standard for labeling of foods containing a genetically modified ingredient. Almost all U.S. beets are engineered to resist glyphosate herbicide, but Lee emphasized GMO protein and DNA are removed during processing.

Lee's schedule has been hectic in the weeks since he was nominated by a secret ballot and won the ASGA presidency uncontested. He's consulted on issues frequently with ASGA Executive Vice President Luther Markwart and traveled throughout the country attending events. Lee, a fourth-generation farmer who raises beets, peppermint, asparagus, hay, grain, corn, beef and dairy on 1,200 acres in southwest Idaho, has been president of the Nyssa-Nampa Beet Growers Association for the past seven years and has served on the board for 17 years. He serves on Snake River Sugar's board of directors, and he was vice president of ASGA before becoming its 21st president. "It's a very talented group of board members — very progressive," Lee said. Though Amalgamated is the No. 2 beet sugar producing company in the U.S., processing sugar for growers in Idaho, Oregon and Washington, Markwart said it's never had a president due to scheduling challenges with growers in the Northwest, who use irrigation and have a harder time freeing their schedules

Business grew from salvage yard to international player

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press



Eric Mortenson/Capital Press
Farmland Tractor founder Randy Raschein Sr. takes a seat on one of his favorites, a 1941 narrow-tracked International Harvester that he bought used in 1963 and later sold. As a surprise, his family found it about 10 years ago, bought it and secretly restored it before presenting it back to him.

TANGENT, ORE. — From Oregon 34, cutting west off Interstate 5 toward Corvallis, it looks like a tractor graveyard. Skeletons of old International, Case and John Deere tractors, combines and other farm and construction equipment sit in neat rows. Most have been plucked of parts. That was Randy Raschein Sr.'s original vision for Farmland Tractor Supply when he started the business in 1980. A recession was draining the country's economic life, and Raschein figured a tractor salvage yard would find a market with farmers who were patching old equipment instead of buying new. "There was a need here, for sure," Raschein said. His instinct was on the money, and the business has grown steadily over the past 36 years. The view of the original salvage yard from the highway is misleading, because Farmland Tractor Supply now covers 30 acres and has two acres of covered parts storage plus a machine shop and other manufacturing, storage and office space. Individual parts are tagged and tracked by computer. "A lot of people think it's an old junkyard, but it's not," Raschein Sr. said.



Eric Mortenson/Capital Press
Randy Raschein Sr., founder of Farmland Tractor Supply walks down a line of tractors in various stages of salvage. The business, near Tangent, Ore., sells new and rebuilt parts and engines as well.

The business still carries used parts, from crankshafts to radiators and rims, but in many cases they were salvaged from newer equipment that was damaged in a fire or accident. Farmland also carries after-market parts made by other manufacturers to fit various equipment lines. The business also overhauls and sells engines. A significant number of customers are small or beginning farmers. For them, a business such as Farmland could fill an important niche, said Gary Stephenson, director of Oregon State University's Center for Small Farms and Community Food Systems. New and small farmers are interested in used equipment for the cost savings and because older equipment is often small-

er and a better fit for the scale of their farms, Stephenson said by email. Fellow OSU Extension small farms specialist Heidi Noordijk agreed, noting that new farmers who don't inherit family gear struggle to buy new equipment. A tractor is the biggest need for most farmers, she said. Thanks to the Internet, new farmers and even international customers find their way to Farmland Tractor Supply. "We've sent parts to Africa, Greenland, Australia — we had a guy in here from New Zealand," Raschein Sr. said. His son, Randy Raschein Jr., has traveled to China to meet with

suppliers. He's also introduced a new line of LED lighting systems called Tiger Lights that can be plugged into existing equipment and provides more light, for longer periods, with less demand on the tractor's electrical system. Farmland remains a family business. Randy Raschein Sr.'s grandsons, Ty and Dustin, also work in the business, as does his daughter, Suzy Klein. His 9-year-old great-grandson, Wyatt Eastman, spends time at the business as well. The family worked together to pull off a surprise for Raschein Sr. In 1963, when he was farming in California, he bought an

On-line:
<http://www.farmlandtractor.com>

unusual narrow-tracked 1941 International Harvester from the U.S. Forest Service. He sold it when he quit farming, but always retained a fondness for International equipment. He sold parts for them at dealerships, including one that brought him to work at a store in the Willamette Valley before he started his own business. About a decade ago, his son, Randy Jr., came across his father's paperwork from the sale. He tracked down the buyer, convinced him to sell back the International and set about restoring it in secret. "I didn't want to let it get away," he said. The family hauled the restored tractor to a show in Brooks, Ore., and took Raschein Sr. to look around. Coming across the tractor, and not yet knowing it was his, he expressed surprise because he'd never seen another one. "It's not even in the parts book," he said. A sign at the display told the story, and he happily realized he'd been had. "They rebuilt it under my nose," he said with a laugh.

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